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20 December 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director of Central Intelligence
SUBJECT : Recommendation for the Retention of the
CIA IDEALIST Program

1. The attached memorandum contains justification for retention of the CIA IDEALIST Program.
2. Recommend release for consideration of the 303 Committee on 19 December 1969.

/s/

CARL E. DUCKETT
Deputy Director for Science and Technology

Attachment - [] 9228-69

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CONCUR:

/s/

Executive Director/Comptroller

Release of the attached memorandum to the members of the 303 Committee is authorized.

/s/

Acting Director of Central Intelligence
Date: _____

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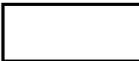


18 December 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: 303 Committee

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Retention of the CIA IDEALIST Program

1. The Agency U-2 program provides the U.S. a flexible overhead reconnaissance system with unique capabilities for high

resolution  photography,



The system can react rapidly to world-wide crisis situations cheaply, effectively, and at little political risk to the U.S. Government,



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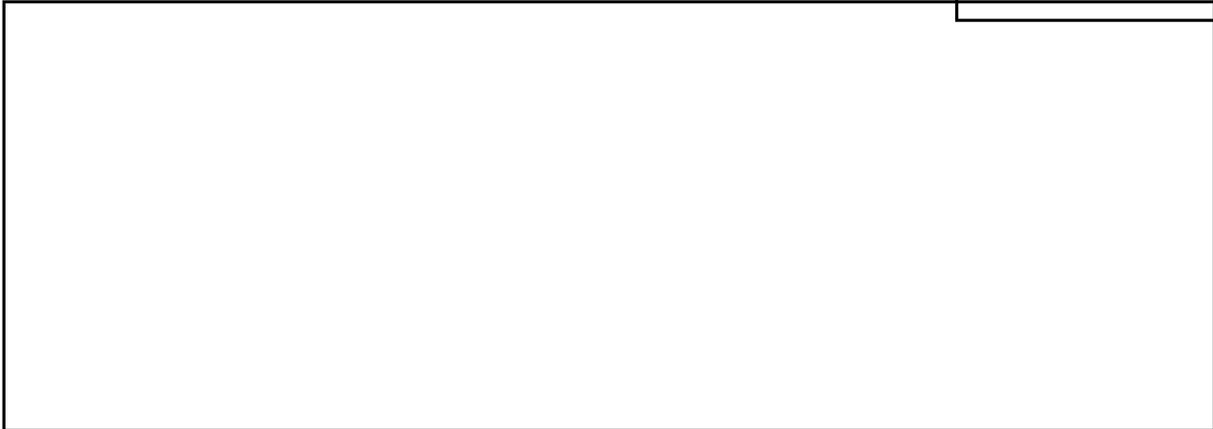
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This U-2 capability can be utilized on short notice with a reaction time of approximately fifty hours anywhere in the world.

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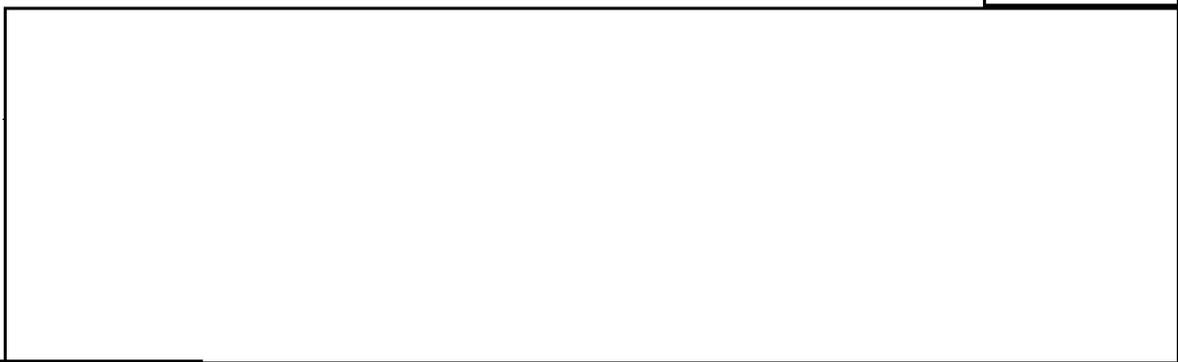
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3. This program provides the U.S. Government with a low cost option for meeting future crisis situations in areas other than the more heavily defended areas of the Soviet Union. The vulnerability of satellites makes such an option especially desirable, particularly when it is recognized that neutralization of these vehicles would deny this country a high percentage of its strategic intelligence.

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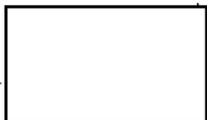
The program assets (airplanes, major equipment and

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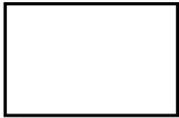
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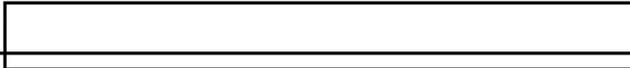
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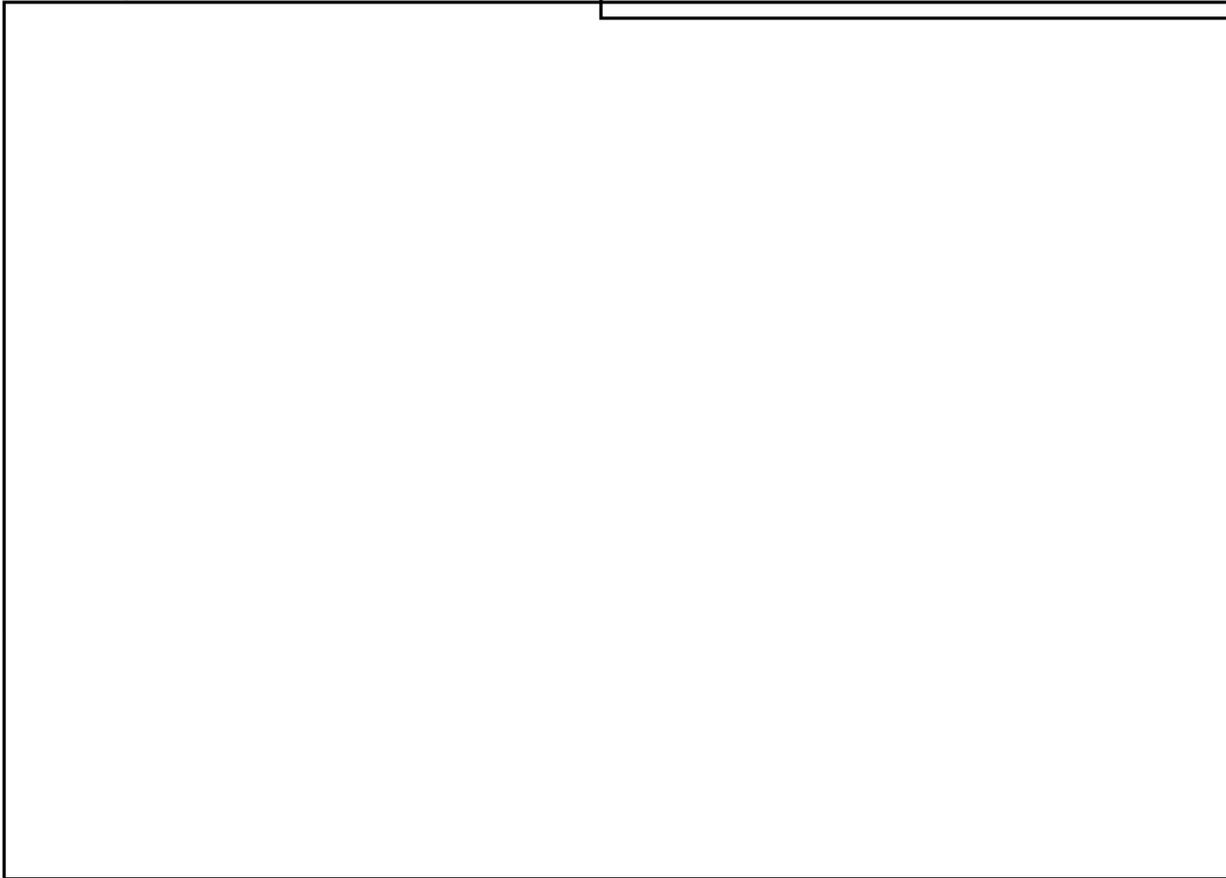


facilities) are now paid for. The Agency program as now envisioned is projected to cost approximately



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5. It is the opinion of CIA that the availability of this flexible, quick reaction capability for covert reaction to world-wide crises more than justifies the cost of retention. It is recognized that broad U.S. policy considerations must govern U-2 operations and decisions, especially as far as overflights of China are concerned. And it is true that for the past few years we have been reluctant to allow overflights

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even with covert manned aircraft. However, it is important to note that in times of crisis our attitude in this regard can change rapidly. It is for such contingencies that a covert capability like the U-2 would become very important to the President. If we terminate this program now, this option will be lost.

6. It is therefore recommended that Project IDEALIST be continued.

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